

Northern Plains Resource Council Testimony
SB 180
by Beth Kaeding
March 22, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Beth Kaeding and I live in Bozeman. I am a long-time member and a past chair of Northern Plains Resource Council. We are a grassroots conservation and family agriculture organization that focuses on land stewardship, the protection of Montana's waters, and the preservation of family farms and ranches. I am here today on behalf of our members.

Eminent domain is a very powerful authority and should only be used as a last resort. Honest negotiation between willing parties should always be the primary focus of any project because the use of eminent domain means that a landowner's private property is condemned for taking.

Last session, Northern Plains vigorously opposed HB 198 because, in our view, it broadened the power of eminent domain in a wrong direction. HB 198 gives the power of eminent domain to any entity obtaining a certificate under the Major Facilities Siting Act, whether or not the project is a public project for the public good or not. Thus, HB 198 expands the power of eminent domain to private corporations for non-public, for-profit projects. Northern Plains does not believe that is right nor good public policy.

Northern Plains very much supports SB 180 and urges the Committee to give this bill a "do pass."

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.